

Z. tephropleura of Gould, from Lord Howe Island, but the latter species can be readily distinguished from the spring plumage of *Z. cærulescens* by its bright yellow under tail-coverts and by its larger and more robust bill. At the Macleay Museum I have examined the type of *Z. Ramsayi*, described by Mr. George Masters from specimens obtained by him on one of the Palm Islands lying north of Halifax Bay, N.E. Queensland. It is a good and distinct species, with olive-yellow under tail-coverts and a broad zone of white feathers round the eye. Dr. Sharpe, from the description of this species given in the 'Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales'*, considers it probably identical with *Z. westernensis*; but there is no question that the specific character pointed out by Mr. Masters and the olive-yellow under tail-coverts will prevent one when examining this species from confounding it with the spring or summer plumage of *Z. cærulescens* or with any other Australian member of this genus.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On the Coloration of certain Insects of the Order Lepidoptera.

By ÉMILE BLANCHARD.

I HAVE made numerous experiments with a view to modifying the colour of certain Lepidoptera; these experiments have been made more particularly on the butterfly commonly known as the Peacock (*Vanessa io*), the most richly coloured of all our Lepidoptera. Taking young caterpillars on the point of hatching from the egg, I placed them in boxes under red, green or blue, and violet-coloured glass. On the day of hatching no colour had undergone the slightest modification. Individuals reared in complete obscurity were hatched as brilliantly adorned as those reared in the full light. As the larvæ of the Peacock feed on nettles, the stalks of nettles, passing through small holes in the bottom of well-closed boxes, were received in vessels of water, so as not to need renewing very often; when changing became necessary, this was done in a darkened chamber. Notwithstanding every care no alteration took place in any shade of the wing of the butterfly.

There is, however, one point of difference which appears well indicated—the action of light. A small species of the genus *Vanessa*, known by the popular name of Carte géographique, from the pattern of its wings, has two annual generations. In the individuals the whole of whose metamorphoses take place in the summer the wings are black: this is *Vanessa prorsa*. In the individuals which pass the winter in the pupa state the wings are fawn: this is the variety *levana*.—*Comptes Rendus*, Dec. 16, 1895.

* Vol. i. p. 50.